



Minutes

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| Name of meeting | Economic Development Board (EDB) Executive Partners meeting |
| Date and time | 12 May 2022, 10am Ascensos offices, Northwood |
| Present | Present: Norman Arnold (Chair), Julie Jones-Evans, Janet Stevens, Steve Holbrook, Chris Ashman, Ashley Curzon, Jude Robinson (online for item 3) |
| Apologies | Will Myles |
| 1. | Minutes of the Economic Development Board meeting held on 30 March 2022 Approved. |
| 2. | Shared Prosperity Fund Levelling Up Fund (LUF) round 2 CA introduced the LUF 2 announcement by government and reminded the partners that the IW had been successful in LUF round 1 with the Venture Quays proposal and under LUF criteria could only make a bid for LUF 2 for a transport related proposal. The two schemes in scope were highways access to unlock the employment development at Nicholson Rd, Ryde which had the benefit of a planning approval for the delivery of the greenway, a long term aspiration to provide a cycle route from the west wight by use of the former railway line to Newport and then beyond to the east of the Island. There was some particular support for the greenway project from executive members and CA indicated that this was the preferred scheme for LUF2. A paper was due to be considered by Cabinet in June to meet the deadline for submission by the end of the month. 50+/olderpreneurs CA went on to outline the governments UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) announcement which was replacing the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). UKSPF would be via an allocation of money to local authorities rather than a competitive bid process (LUF etc). The council's allocation over three years is £1,063,636 which was well below expectation and very disappointing. An additional £666,324 was being made available to upper tier councils (including unitary councils such as the IWC) to improve adult numeracy skills and is specifically allocated for that purpose. |

In order to receive their allocations, local authorities are required to submit investment plans to government by 1 August indicating how the funds would be used. Approval of investment plans was expected from October 2022 onwards.

IWC Cabinet is due to consider and agree the submission of its investment plan in July in order to meet the deadline for submission to government by 1 August 2022.

The government UKSPF to be focussed on three themes:

- Community and place
- Business Support
- Skills

CA outlined the council's current thinking around its investment plan based on the guidance, limited funding and timescales for delivery (all funds to be spent by March 2025). CA gave some potential but very indicative figures based on the funding available.

Community and place - the appointment of three additional area regeneration project managers (£150k per annum) to support the West Wight, the Bay and Ryde in developing regeneration projects as has been successful in Newport. In addition, funding for cultural activity (£50k per annum) as a new priority in the corporate plan and the opportunities linked to the Southampton City of Culture bid.

Business Support - extending the provision of business activities being provided by the ERDF funded project at Innovation Wight to include olderpreneuers/ 50 plus (£50k per annum) which was beyond the scope of ERDF. An Innovation Fund (£100k per annum) which could support a limited number of large projects or a greater number of smaller ones.

Skills - funding for a regional skills programme (£50k per annum) and a specific focus on learning and skills for business relating to retro fitting (£100k per annum) around the net zero agenda in the construction industry (electric boilers, GSHP, insulation, PV etc.)

The partners were also disappointed in the funding made available and questioned what would be achieved and the additional resources required to deliver and audit the process. CA indicated that 4% had been allowed for management and administration of the fund but the alternative was to make no bid when there was no other potential sources of funding being made available, other than UKSPF, to tackle the issues faced on the Island.

The partners were broadly supportive of the key areas identified although in terms of Ryde regeneration support, the existing capacity of the town council was highlighted, and it was felt that larger innovation grants to a small number of projects was likely to be more successful.

Further discussions would take place with other external stakeholders including the IW Skills Board before any consideration by the Cabinet in July.

3. **Skills Board**

Jude Robinson from HCC joined the meeting online and the board were reminded that the council had secured her to provide a day a week of her time to help deliver the skills agenda. In approving the Skills Strategy and Action Plan it was agreed to establish an IW Skills Board and at the previous meeting it was resolved to agree a TOR, membership of the Skills Board and identify key priorities.

TOR

The draft TOR was circulated and in general agreed with some comments about it being more action focussed and needed to be refreshed given recent recruitment and labour issues on the Island. Once the Skills Board was established the draft of the TOR would be tabled there for any final amends.

Membership

Some discussion took place around size of the board and the need to ensure representation of various sectors and organisations did not mean it became too large and end up as a talking shop. The chair role was important, and it was suggested that Rachael Randall being asked given her role as a local business, training provider and also current chair of the SLEP.

ACTION – AC to approach RR as possible chair.

Priority Actions

To be reviewed by the Skills Board once established.

ACTION- AC/JR to establish the new skills Board with first meeting in June before next EDB.

4. **Recovery Plan update**

CA gave a general update on the recovery plan work and in particular the link to anti poverty agenda and the role of the health and well being board which NA attended on behalf of the business sector.

5. **Exec Members update**

JS highlighted Debbie Lavin's departure as CX of the IW College. The Isle of Wight College was due to announce shortly the appointment of Ros Parker OBE as its next Principal for the start of Autumn term 2022.

JJE announced the relaunch of the Green Impact scheme offering Island businesses the chance to improve their sustainability and reduce their carbon footprint by improving their environmental performance and reducing operational costs.

6. **AOB**

None

7. **Innovation Wight (IW) centre visit**

The group visited IW and works underway at Building 41 next door accompanied by Chris Bramall who has been the IWC lead on the project. The project was on schedule to open in August but a more formal opening event would take place in the autumn.

8. Date of future meetings

Scheduled every six weeks as follows

Thursday 11 August, 10am-12pm

Thursday 15 September, 10am-12pm

Thursday 27 October, 10am-12pm

Thursday 8 December, 10am-12pm